Resource Guide to Establishing a Family Child Care Home in Sacramento County

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Introduction

Thank you for your interest in developing quality family child care. This booklet is designed to give an overview of the procedures for developing and licensing family child care homes. Taking care of the emotional, physical and developmental needs of children is a big responsibility. A child care program is not only a social service for families and employers; it also needs to be a viable business. This guide will support you through the process of planning for and opening a family child care home.

Making the decision to become a licensed provider can be a process that is full of excitement and unknowns. It is exciting to think about starting a new business. Questions and uncertainties may arise as you consider providing care out of your home. It’s normal to have some feelings of uncertainty about whether or not this is the right path for you.

There are some very rewarding aspects of opening a family child care. When you open your home to children and parents you are creating a small business of your very own. It’s a great feeling to have the ability to set your own schedule and be your own boss. You are using your experience to contribute to your own family’s support as you provide a valued and professional service. It’s the kind of work that lets you spend time with your own children, while working, and because you’re maintaining a business, many of your expenses may be tax deductible.
Section 1: Getting Started
Making the decision to open a family child care business can bring up an array of emotions; the excitement of being your own boss and the opportunity to build relationships and help families. It can also be unsettling. You may be asking yourself the following questions:

**How will this impact my family and home?**
**Will my home meet licensing requirements?**
**Will this new venture be profitable?**

Being a family child care provider can be a rewarding and satisfying career. You can make a difference in the lives of the children and parents you serve. Your family should be included in your decision to care for children in the home. It is important to reflect and look at how you will balance the needs of your family and your child care business.

## Taking Inventory

- Is your home able to meet licensing requirements?
- Are you able to maintain accurate records?
- What areas of the home will be used for your business?
- How will your family adapt to sharing their time, home and toys with other children?
- Will the family pet be integrated into the child care program?
- Do you enjoy being around children and supporting their development?
- Do you have the desire and energy to care for children all day?
- Do you enjoy talking to people and building relationships?
- How will you meet the individual needs of each child?
- Finally, are you ready to open your own life and your family’s life to others?

## The Need for Child Care in Your Community

Starting a family child care program is no different than starting any kind of business. It’s important to know if there is a demand for services before investing time and money. Every five years, the Local Child Care Development and Planning Council (LPC) publishes a report about the child care needs in Sacramento County.

Data on the number of child care spaces in the area, average household incomes and the number of children in the area will help you get a thorough understanding of the child care needs of your potential clients. You can view the most current report at [www.childaction.org](http://www.childaction.org). Child Action, Inc. can also provide demographic data available by zip code for all of Sacramento County.
This data can be helpful. Your own experience is also important. Take the time to make your own observations, talk to friends and neighbors, and think about the services that are nearby as well as the services that are missing. Perhaps your program can fill a need in your community that will be appreciated.

- How many other providers are there in your area?
- What age care is needed? Infant? Toddler? School Age?
- Are there elementary schools near your home?
- Is there a need for programs with a special focus—drop-in, evening, weekend, mildly ill, special needs?

Now that you’ve done some reflection and are still excited to open a child care in your home, what happens next?

**Do you need a license?**

A family child care license is not required when you are caring for children from one other family in addition to your own children. If you plan on caring for children from more than one family, it is required that you have a family child care license issued by the State of California.

The licensing process is more straightforward than you might expect. It means ensuring that your home offers a safe, healthy, stimulating environment for young children. The entire licensing process can take between one and four months. A family child care license is only valid for the home licensed and providers named on that license.

Maintaining a child care license shows families that you meet the state requirements and regulations to help ensure children are in a safe and healthy home environment.

The California Department of Social Services, Community Care Licensing is responsible for licensing family child care homes and child care centers. Community Care Licensing also monitors family child care homes and child care centers in an effort to ensure that they follow Title 22 regulations. The regulations can be found at www.ccld.ca.gov/PG555.htm

**Types of Family Child Care Licenses**

- **Small Family Child Care License** - Once you are licensed, you may care for up to eight children within your home; this includes your own children under the age of ten.

- **Large Family Child Care License** - Once you have been licensed as a small family child care provider for one year or have verified experience working with children, you may choose to expand to a large family child care license in order to care for up to 14 children.
Basic Licensing Requirements

• Be 18 years of age or older
• Attend a Family Child Care Home Orientation
• Obtain tuberculosis clearance for you, your staff members and all adults over 18 living in your household
• Complete or be enrolled in 16 hours of health and safety training
  The training includes pediatric cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), pediatric first aid, and preventative health practices
• Submit application, all required forms, and fees to Licensing
• Obtain Livescan fingerprinting for you and all other adults over 18 living or having contact with children in the home
• Notify your property owner/landlord of your intent to provide child care
• Pass a home inspection

Start-up Costs

As with any small business, it is important to understand the cost of opening and operating a family child care business so you can plan and budget your expenses.

Cost can include:

• CPR & First Aid training
• Tuberculosis Clearance
• Licensing Orientation Fee
• Licensing Application Fee
• Livescan Fingerprinting
• Fire Extinguisher
• Smoke Alarms
• Carbon Monoxide Detectors
• First Aid Kit
• Child-proofing supplies
• Toys, materials and equipment

The Steps to Getting Licensed

Attend a Family Child Care Orientation

The first step in receiving a Family Child Care License is to complete an orientation prior to applying for your family child care license. Orientations are available in person or online. The decision to take the orientation online or in person is a personal choice, based on your learning style, prior knowledge about licensing, and time available.

In-Person Orientations

• Reserve a spot by calling Child Action, Inc. at (916)369–0191
• Pay for orientation and obtain a receipt by mailing your fee or visiting Community Care Licensing (CCL) at 2525 Natomas Park Drive, Suite 250, Sacramento, 95833
  › In-person orientation fees must be paid at least one day in advance of the orientation
• Attend orientation with your receipt and photo ID

Through the orientation process you will learn:

• The requirements for opening and maintaining a family child care
• Licensing and application process
• Health and safety requirements
• How to prepare your home
• Local resources to assist and support you in your business

Sacramento County orientations are held monthly at the offices of Child Action, Inc. There are other orientations outside of Sacramento County held by Community Care Licensing, and participants are welcome to attend orientation at the location of their choice. For more information about registering for orientations, please visit www.ccll.ca.gov/PG534.htm.
Online Orientations:
- Register and Pay online at www.ccld.ca.gov
  › Once you have paid for the orientation, it is available to you for the period of one month
- Complete the online orientation and print your Certificate of Completion

Complete and Turn in your Application
Mail your completed licensing application packet, your Certificate of Completion for attending the licensing orientation, and a check or money order for the application fee to:

CDSS Sacramento Regional Office
2525 Natomas Park Drive, Suite 250
Sacramento, CA 95833

Use the following checklist to ensure you have everything required in your application packet. This checklist can also be found in the License Application and Instructions for Family Child Care Home (LIC 279A).

- Application (LIC279)
- Current Child in Your Home (LIC279B)
- Proof that you completed orientation (Certificate of Completion)
- Completed Criminal Record Statements for all adults in home and in contact with children (LIC508)
- Emergency Care and Disaster Plan (LIC610A)
- Facility Sketch (LIC999A)
- Proof of Completion or Enrollment in Preventative Health Practices Training
- Tuberculosis Clearances for all adults in the home and in contact with children

Get Fingerprinted
After submitting your licensing application, you will receive a Welcome Letter with your Facility ID along with information on fingerprinting and background clearance. Once you have received your Facility ID you can get fingerprinted. The Department of Justice website at www.ag.ca.ca.gov has a list of approved fingerprinting locations. Call the location nearest you for verification of fees, operation hours and appointments. Photo ID is required.

Prepare for your Visit
Prepare for a visit from your Licensing Analyst. Use the Pre-Licensing Readiness Guide (LIC 9217) provided by State Licensing to go through your house and address any safety concerns. Once you have prepared your home, mail the form back to the licensing agency. Your analyst will call to set an appointment for a home visit. This will be your one and only announced visit!
Section 2: Business Practices
Policies

When starting your child care business it’s important to decide what type of care you wish to provide and what resources you’ll need to support it. As you design your policies keep in mind the partnership you are building with parents and families as you share the care of their child. Use discussions of policy as an opportunity to get to know families. This can help you and parents identify goals, celebrate successes and address delicate topics. Your efforts to build a supportive relationship with parents and families will create a strong system of care for children.

• What is your personal philosophy on caring for children?
• How will you exchange and have ongoing communication with parents?
• What are your emergency procedures?
• How will you address illnesses and injuries?

Handbooks

As with any business, it’s important to put everything in writing. A handbook is an opportunity to share your goals, your qualifications and your program with families. Having a conversation about policies with parents gives them a chance to share important information about their children and routines at home. Together, you and parents will create a healthy place for children at home and in your program.

Some sections to include are:

Program Philosophy
• What are your goals for your program?
• Why do you want to care for children?
• What are your beliefs on how children learn?
• How will you address challenges?

Hours of Operation
• What are your opening and closing times?
• Will you offer full time, part time, drop in or weekend care?
• How will you plan for sick days, vacations, and holidays?

Fees and Payment
• What is your payment policy?
• Do you require a deposit or registration fee?
• Will you offer a family discount?
• What are your late fees?
• How will you handle fees when a family goes on vacation or a child is absent?

Health and Safety
• What is your procedure for handling emergencies?
• How will you handle a child who becomes ill in care?
• How will your notify parents if their child becomes ill?
• What are the procedures as a Mandated Reporter?
• Will you accommodate special diets?

Communication
• What methods will you use to communicate with parents?
• How will you partner with parents in their child’s development?
• Are there ways you can involve families in your program?
Record Keeping

Keeping records and documents organized and confidential is an important part of your Family Child Care business. These are examples of some things that you may want to include:

Personal Records
- License
- Criminal Background clearance
- CPR & First aid cards
- Health screenings for all adults in the home
- Trainings and Workshops certificates
- Letters of recommendation from parents

Children’s Records
- Signed parent-provider contract
- Emergency information
- Immunizations records
- Daily attendance records
- Instructions for medications, allergies, treatments, etc.
- Incident reports
- Child observations notes
- Parent conference notes and communications

Forms
- Authorization to Administer Medication
- Field Trip/Transportation Authorization
- Consent for Photographs
- Persons Authorized to Pick-up Children

Business Records
- Licensing information and inspection reports
- Insurance policies
- Fire drill log
- Copy of your Policies and Procedures
- Records of child care payments and receipts
- Income and expense records
- Receipts, bills, invoices, and bank statements related to your business
Section 3: Planning Your Program
Every child care program is different. Your program will not be like any other. The interests and passions you bring, the environment you design, and the relationships you build will make your business uniquely your own. Quality child care programs do have some elements in common. As you plan your program, think about ways to incorporate these markers of quality.

Building Partnerships

Children benefit when parents and providers communicate and work together to plan and provide care. Providers will share their experiences and knowledge about child development. Parents contribute their knowledge about their child’s strengths, interests, and abilities. Together you can build a wonderful support system to provide the best care for their children. Developing a good parent-provider partnership takes commitment, dedication and time.

- Recognize that the parent is the expert on their child
- Create an atmosphere that welcomes partnerships

Children thrive in an environment that has enough space to play indoors and outdoors with opportunities for active play and quiet time. Materials that are organized and accessible allow children to make choices that support their development and create an atmosphere that helps them feel more secure and independent.

As a family child care provider you have the opportunity to care for children from mixed age groups with a variety abilities and interests. Consider the developmental range of infants, preschoolers and school age children when creating interest areas where children learn through play. Thoughtfully planned, your program can welcome families, challenge all ages of children to grow and learn, and provide a safe place for the children in your care.

Physical Environment

- Offer a variety of materials for children to pretend and act out meaningful stories
- Plan indoor and outdoor hands-on activities that encourage children to use their five senses
- Provide space for children to build and practice their fine motor skills
- Gather a wide variety of books
- Have space for children to store their personal belongings
- Include natural objects
- Provide equipment and materials that encourage active play
Social Atmosphere

- Welcome children and families as they arrive for the day
- Model and praise the use of acceptable behavior
- Use gentle redirection when necessary
- Encourage healthy habits and conversation during mealtimes
- Plan a daily routine
- Organize developmentally appropriate activities
- Provide materials that reflect diverse cultures and promote acceptance

Inclusion

An inclusive program supports the families of children with special needs and provides children with the opportunity for play, learning, and developing friendships alongside their peers. An environment that promotes understanding and acceptance benefits all children as they participate in daily routines and a variety of developmentally appropriate activities.

- How will you encourage children to meet goals that are appropriate for their development?
- What support services can you use to help meet the needs of families of children with special needs?
- How will you adapt activities so that all children have access and can participate?
- What are some ways you plan to accommodate the unique needs of children and families?
Section 4:
Professionalism
Investing in your own professional development will keep you inspired and surrounded with other educators who provide the same valuable work as you. The families you serve will be happy to know that your expertise and commitment to professional growth supports their child’s learning and development.

Now let’s think about your vision for the future. You are going to be committed to your program for many hours a day and will need others for support when you experience challenges, want to share your successes or find new exciting ideas to keep children and yourself inspired. Establishing personal relationships and networking with other providers can be a valuable support system as you begin your journey.

While working with you to discover what quality child care looks like to you, we offer incentives to support you along the way including curriculum items, health and safety kits and reimbursement of licensing and CPR fees. All of this is in addition to the wealth of knowledge you will get while participating in our workshops and programs, and networking with other local child care providers.

For a complete listing of upcoming workshops and trainings, check our Calendar of Events online at www.childaction.org or contact a Child Care Specialist at (916) 369–0191.

**Child Care Specialists from Child Action, Inc. are happy to talk with you about:**

- Assistance with the licensing process
- Incentives to become licensed
- Support in establishing your quality family child care business
- Health & Safety Training Scholarships
- Free Resource Library Membership
- Child Care Food Programs

**Grow as a Professional**

- Join a local or national association
- Network with other providers
- Continue your education
- Attend workshops and trainings
- Assess and evaluate your program
- Consider national accreditation

**Building Quality Child Care**

Child Action, Inc. is one of the organizations committed to working with children and families in Sacramento County. We offer a variety of services to support child care providers including free workshops, trainings, a free resource library, handouts, newsletters, a website and on-site assistance. Child Action, Inc. offers free workshop series specifically designed for family child care providers in multiple languages. These series explore the key ingredients in beginning a child care business and building a quality family child care program.
Building Quality

Comprehensive Approaches to Raising Educational Standards (CARES) encourages child care providers to remain working directly with children in the child care field while continuing their education by providing stipends and incentives. To learn more about requirements for CARES, attend an orientation.

Quality Child Care Collaborative (QCCC) assists Sacramento County child care providers in building quality child care programs. Their services include information, resources, training and consultation.

Child Care Initiative Project (CCIP) provides resources and support to individuals who are in the process of becoming licensed.

Contact Child Action, Inc. at (916) 369–0191 for information on any of these programs.

Associations

The Association of Family Child Care Educators (FCCE) FCCE is a non-profit professional organization committed building professionalism within the early care and education field. This association provides support, professional development, and resources to the community, families and family child care providers/educators. Regular membership is for anyone who provides family child care or has an interest in supporting the early care and education. Visit their website at: www.myfcce.org.

The California Association for the Education of Young Children (CAEYC) CAEYC serves and acts on behalf of the needs and rights of young children with primary focus on the provision of educational services and resources to adults who work with and for children from birth through age eight. Visit their website at: www.caeyc.org.

The California Association for Family Child Care (CAFCC) One of many associations that have organized a cooperative link with the child care community. Visit their website at: www.cafcc.org.

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) NAEYC is dedicated to improving the well-being of all young children, with particular focus on the quality of educational and developmental services for all children from birth through age 8. You can visit their website at: www.naeyc.org.

National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC) NAFCC is the only nationally recognized accreditation system specifically for family child care providers and is the highest indicator available to demonstrate that a family child care program is providing a quality environment for children. For more information call (800) 359–3817 or visit www.nafcc.net. For support in becoming accredited, contact Child Action, Inc. at (916) 369–0191.
Community


call 9-1-1
For life or death emergencies that require the immediate response of emergency services such as police, fire or paramedic.

Call 3-1-1
For non emergency services within the City of Sacramento

Call (916) 875–5000
For non emergency services within Sacramento County

Call 2-1-1
www.211sacramento.org
For information about social services in Sacramento County

American Red Cross
Capital Region
Disaster Relief
Health and Safety Training & Education
www.redcross.org
(916) 993–7070

California Poison Control
www.calpoison.org
(800) 222–1222

Recalls on Children’s Products
Consumer Product Safety Commission
www.cpsc.gov
Recalls
www.recalls.gov

Sacramento County Child Protective Services (CPS)
To file a report, contact (916) 875–KIDS

Sacramento County Office of Emergency Services
Sacramento County Office of Emergency Services Coordinates the responses and procedures for the emergency rescue agencies in the county.
www.sacoes.org
(916) 874–4670